

assistance in arriving at a definite diagnosis and in estimating the effect of treatment on the course of certain diseases can be afforded by periodical and systematic examinations of the blood. Till quite recently, however, but little attention has been directed, especially in this country, to this line of investigation, and you have done, therefore, a good service to clinical medicine by calling attention to the trustworthiness or the reverse of the methods commonly employed for such purpose. The remarks as to the unsatisfactory nature of the results obtained in estimating the amount of hæmaglobin in a specimen of blood by means of the hæmaglobinometer I can fully endorse, as doubtless can all who have had much occasion to make use of this instrument or others of a somewhat similar nature. The main difficulties that one has to contend with are ably set out in your leading article, and it was with the hope of obviating some, at any rate, of the possible fallacies there referred to that I wished a few years ago to make trial in work on the blood of Lovibond's tintometer, an instrument then recently introduced for the estimation of colour in various trade processes. The apparatus was kindly placed at my disposal by the inventor, and in conjunction with him I carried out a large number of experiments on blood in health and disease, the results of which convinced me that we have in this instrument an exceedingly accurate means of estimating even minute variations in the hæmaglobin power of the blood. This is so even though the blood be more or less opaque, as is liable to be the case in leucocythæmia, for instance—a condition of things which would render estimations carried out with the hæmaglobinometer altogether valueless. I demonstrated the use of the tintometer for hæmaglobin estimation in the pathological section of the British Medical Association at the Birmingham meeting (in 1891, I believe) and have since then constantly used the instrument for this purpose, and have put on record certain of the results obtained with it. A week or two ago Dr. Oliver showed, at a meeting of the Physiological Society, a simplified form of the instrument which Mr. Lovibond and he had devised, and which will doubtless come into extensive use for clinical work as soon as its superiority over the hæmaglobinometer becomes more fully appreciated. For extremely accurate work, however, and especially if the blood be at all opaque, the original and more bulky instrument is essential, and should, I venture to think, find a place in every physiological laboratory.

I am, Sirs, yours truly,

S. MONCKTON COPEMAN.

Cromwell-crescent, S.W., March 31st, 1896.

PROTEST AGAINST THE INJUSTICE OF THE MEDICAL AUTHORITIES."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—I shall not regret that you have published the notice-card of mine which was sent you if it serves to reopen a question which will not be allowed to drop again until it is settled once and for all. At the same time I may be permitted to express my surprise that in the comments you were good enough to make on the card in question you should not have felt it necessary to connect it with the general scheme and design of which it was the outcome—a scheme which was contained in a series of interviews on the "Degradation of the Medical Profession," published in the *Paddington Mercury*, and copies of which were duly sent you; for without such connexion and commentary the notice—divorced, as it were, from its context—is calculated to lay me open to misapprehension, while the tone of your comment to those who do not know the circumstances is calculated to do me serious injury. But as you are unwilling to allow me space for the discussion of the various points raised on the interviews I must ask you to allow me to make the necessary personal explanation. The card, as its wording implies, was at once a protest against the injustice of the medical authorities in permitting the touting from door to door of club agents for the benefit of particular medical men and a practical solution to a state of affairs which has become well-nigh intolerable, and arose out of a question of the editor as to whether some scale of fees could not be devised which would be at once within the means of working-class people and at the same time would give the medical man "a living wage." To this I replied that I believed such a tariff was possible, and expressed my willingness to adopt it if other medical men could be found to support me in it.

Meanwhile the General Medical Council had refused even its "moral disapprobation" of the club system, and had even gone so far as to say that it existed, not for the protection of the profession against the public, but for the protection of the public against medical men. We were plainly told that we were not to expect any help from them in our battle with the clubs and were left to fight the matter out as best we may. The cards accordingly were issued after consultation with, and by the approval of, a number of other local practitioners not connected with the clubs, as an experiment to see how far the battle with the clubs could be successfully fought in this particular locality by a scale of fees such as I propose, I, as the oldest practitioner, undertaking to issue the cards in my own name and on my own responsibility. As regards my own *bona fides* in the matter, I may say that the cards were sent beforehand to the different medical journals, together with copies of the interviews in the *Paddington Mercury*, inviting comments on my scheme, and intimating that I would report progress as to the results of the experiment. That it was from no jealousy of the club medical men that I issued the cards is evident from this, that not only had I the first refusal of the leading clubs when they started here some years ago, but within the last few weeks I have had again the offer of one of the largest of them, and have again refused on the ground stated in the interviews, viz., that it is impossible to do justice either to oneself or the patient unless the club rate is *doubled*—that is to say, is made 2*d.* a week instead of 1*d.*, as at present. And, lastly, as I was by my new tariff to receive in future only one-half of what I had been receiving from all the old patients who fell within the wage limit laid down by me the experiment, as, indeed, it has so far proved, was a very doubtful one so far as any increase of my own income is concerned. It is too soon of course for a final judgment, but my own feeling from all I have learned is that the clubs are so deeply entrenched that nothing can prevail against them except a scale of fees on which it is quite impossible to live.

I am, Sirs, yours faithfully,

JOHN BEATTIE CROZIER.

Elgin-avenue, W., March 24th, 1896.

"THE QUESTION OF MEDICAL DEFENCE."

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—In reply to Mr. Horsley's letter which appeared in THE LANCET of March 28th we beg leave to say that we have nothing to add to what we have already stated on this subject, and we must decline to be drawn into the discussion of any such irrelevant matters as the alleged interference of solicitors. This is, so far as we are concerned, our last remark on this subject. Thanking you for your courtesy,

We are, Sirs, yours faithfully,

G. A. HERON,

W. BRUCE CLARKE,

{ Delegates of the London
and Counties Medical
Protection Society.

March 31st, 1896.

To the Editors of THE LANCET.

SIRS,—Your article on the report of the Medical Defence Union, Limited, raises an important point—namely, the expediency of the absorption of the Union by the British Medical Association. This absorption appears to me to be desirable solely on the ground of economy. Multiplicity of organisations—if they are to serve any useful purpose at all—implies waste of money and waste of energy, and one powerful organisation will produce far better results than any number of smaller ones. Then another point arises: Is it not probable that, if there ever is established a powerful representative authority, the present inordinate number of individual cases with which defence associations are concerned will very materially lessen. The great evils which at present are with us owe their origin in a great measure to the want of representative institutions. The corporations aim at keeping the great mass of the profession in *statu pupillari* from the cradle to the grave: so far they have had their success. However much we look back with pleasure on our school and college life, very few of us would wish to have the school-master or the college don in perpetual dominion over us. That condition is, however, to a very large extent that which obtains in our profession. Lecture-room methods are very well in their proper place, but when introduced into everyday life are not likely to promote general harmony. Unless